

What is claimed is:

1 1. Apparatus for processing business data processing
2 activities, said apparatus comprising:

3 an activity instance; and

4 a descriptor for said activity instance associated
5 uniquely with said activity instance;

6 wherein said descriptor includes parameters for
7 determining lifecycle behaviors of said activity instance.

2. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said descriptor
is programmable to modify said lifecycle behaviors according
to a use made of said activity instance.

3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 2 wherein said use of said
activity instance is responsive to a request by a client.

1 4. Apparatus as claimed in claim 2 wherein said use of said
2 activity instance is responsive to a request by an activity
3 instance.

1 5. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor
2 is programmable to modify said lifecycle behaviors according
3 to a position in a system hierarchy of said activity instance.

1 6. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor
2 enables control of concurrency of activity instances.

1 7. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor
2 enables control of re-creation of activity instances.

1 8. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor
2 enables control of termination of activity instances.

1 9. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said descriptor
2 permits creation of an activity instance identifier.

1 10. A method for processing business data processing
2 activities, said method comprising the steps of:

3 defining activity lifecycle characteristics in a
4 descriptor;

5 associating said descriptor uniquely with an activity
6 instance; and

7 using said descriptor to control a lifecycle of said
8 activity instance.

1 11. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor
2 is programmable to enable definition of varying activity

3 lifecycle characteristics according to a use made of said
4 activity instance.

1 12. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein said use of said
2 activity instance is responsive to a request by a client.

1 13. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein said use of said
2 activity instance is responsive to a request by an activity
3 instance.

1 14. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor
2 is programmable to modify said lifecycle behaviors according
3 to a position in a system hierarchy of said activity instance.

1 15. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor
2 enables control of concurrency of activity instances.

1 16. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor
2 enables control of re-creation of activity instances.

1 17. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor
2 enables control of termination of activity instances.

1 18. A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein said descriptor
2 permits creation of an activity instance identifier.

1 19. A computer program product comprising computer program
2 instructions stored on a computer-readable medium for, when
3 loaded into a computer and executed, causing the computer to
4 carry out the steps of the method as claimed in claim 10.

1 20. A computer program product as claimed in claim 19,
2 wherein said descriptor is programmable to enable definition
3 of varying activity lifecycle characteristics according to a
4 use made of said activity instance.

1 21. A computer program product as claimed in claim 20 wherein
2 said use of said activity instance is responsive to a request
3 by a client.

1 22. A computer program product as claimed in claim 20 wherein
2 said use of said activity instance is responsive to a request
3 by an activity instance.

1 23. A computer program product as claimed in claim 19,
2 wherein said descriptor is flexibly programmable to modify
3 said lifecycle behaviors according to a position in a system
4 hierarchy of said activity instance.